

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1-5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently amended) The optical fiber tape according to claim-4 7, wherein the protective tube is fixed to the optical fibers at the fixation section or a position near the fixation section.

7. (Currently amended) An optical fiber tape, comprising:

a fiber array adapted to be connected to an optical waveguide;

a fixation section;

a tape fiber including a plurality of tape sections, each tape section produced by aligning a plurality of optical fibers and forming the aligned optical fibers into a tape section, said tape sections being fixed to the fiber array, said plurality of optical fibers, ~~at a position~~ over a portion of said tape fiber between the fiber array and the fixation section, being separated into a predetermined number of optical fiber groups which is smaller in number than the number of said plurality of optical fibers, said groups being fixed to the fixation section; ~~and~~

a rearrangement section for rearranging the optical fibers, said rearrangement section being located at the fixation section or a position near the fixation section; and

a protective tube covering said plurality of optical fibers over said portion of the tape fiber.

8. (Currently amended) The optical fiber tape according to claim-47, further comprising:
a case containing the rearrangement section, with one end of the protective tube fixed
to one end of the case.

9. (Currently amended) The optical fiber tape according to claim-47, further comprising:
a case containing the rearrangement section, with one end of the protective tube fixed
within the case.

10. (Withdrawn) The optical fiber tape according to claim 21, wherein said plurality of
optical fibers are arranged in a plurality of columns having a plurality of stages.

11. (Withdrawn) The optical fiber tape according to claim 10, wherein the number of
columns is ~~2~~two and the number of stages is ~~2~~two.

12. (Currently amended) The optical fiber tape according to claim-47, wherein one end of
the protective tube is fixed.

13. (Currently amended) The optical fiber tape according to claim-47, wherein the
protective tube is fixed to optical fibers ~~in the position~~ where the plurality of optical fibers are
separated.

14. (Withdrawn) The optical fiber tape according to claim-~~5~~21, wherein, in the ~~position~~

portion at which said plurality of optical fibers are arranged parallel to one another and are formed into a tape, the protective tube is fixed to the optical fiber tape.

15. (Previously presented) The optical fiber tape according to claim 7, wherein the order of arrangement of the optical fibers on an end of the rearrangement section remote from the fiber array is identical to the order of arrangement of the optical fibers in the fiber array.

16. (Currently amended) The optical fiber tape according to claim-47, wherein the protective tube is formed of a flame-retardant material.

17. (Currently amended) The optical fiber tape according to claim-47, wherein the protective tube is fixed to the fiber array adjacent the fixation section.

18. (Currently amended) The optical fiber tape according to claim 7, wherein the pitch of the optical fibers in the fiber array is half of the pitch of the separated optical fibers ~~at~~in the ~~position~~portion in the tape fiber between the fiber array and the fixation section.

19-20. (Canceled)

21. (Withdrawn) An optical fiber tape, comprising:
a fiber array adapted to be connected to an optical waveguide;
a fixation section;

a tape fiber including a plurality of tape sections, each tape section produced by aligning a plurality of optical fibers and forming the aligned optical fibers into a tape section, said tape sections being fixed to the fiber array, said plurality of optical fibers, ~~at a position~~ over a portion of said tape fiber between the fiber array and the fixation section, being separated and arranged parallel to one another and being formed into a tape, said tape being fixed to the fixation section; ~~and~~

a rearrangement section for rearranging the optical fibers, said rearrangement section being located at the fixation section or a position near the fixation section; and

a protective tube covering said plurality of optical fibers over said portion of the tape fiber.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Withdrawn) The optical fiber tape according to claim 21, wherein the pitch of the optical fibers in the fiber array is half of the pitch of the parallel optical fibers ~~at in the~~ position-portion in the tape fiber between the fiber array and the fixation section.

24. (Currently amended) An optical fiber tape, comprising:

a fiber array adapted to be connected to an optical waveguide;

a fixation section;

a tape fiber including a plurality of tape sections, each tape section comprising a plurality of optical fibers, said tape sections being fixed to the fiber array, said plurality of

optical fibers being separated ~~at a position over a portion of said tape fiber~~ between the fiber array and the fixation section, ~~and said optical fibers~~ being fixed to the fixation section; ~~and~~
a rearrangement section for rearranging the optical fibers, said rearrangement section being located at the fixation section or a position near the fixation section; and
a protective tube covering said optical fibers over said portion of said tape fiber.

25. (Previously presented) The optical fiber tape according to claim 8, wherein the order of arrangement of the optical fibers on an end of the rearrangement section remote from the fiber array is identical to the order of arrangement of the optical fibers in the fiber array.

26. (Previously presented) The optical fiber tape according to claim 9, wherein the order of arrangement of the optical fibers on an end of the rearrangement section remote from the fiber array is identical to the order of arrangement of the optical fibers in the fiber array.

27. (Withdrawn) The optical fiber tape according to claim ~~5~~ 21, wherein the protective tube comprises a flame-retardant material.

28. (New) The optical fiber tape according to claim 24, wherein the protective tube permits the optical fibers to freely deform and to be flexed within the protective tube.

29. (New) The optical fiber tape according to claim 24, wherein the protective tube comprises a flame retardant material.